



Portrait of Delia Delaney, 1933

Pastel on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the KMA Collectors Circle with additional gifts from Barbara Apking, June and Rob Heller, Donna Kerr, Alexandra Rosen and Donald Cooney, Ted Smith and David Butler, Mimi and Milton Turner, John Cotham, Jan and Pete Crawford, Cathy and Mark Hill, Florence and Russell Johnston, John Z. C. Thomas, Donna and Terry Wertz, Jayne and Myron Ely, Sarah Stowers, Robin and Joe Ben Turner, and Jacqueline Wilson

This pastel presents a bold and vibrant likeness of the artist's mother, Delia (1865-1958), the matriarch of the Delaney family. The portrait must have been an important keepsake, as the artist never sold it and used it as the basis for a larger oil portrait some 30 years later. While Delaney describes her features with great attention to detail and conveys her strength, he transforms the background into an abstract study of luminous color.



Joseph Delaney, 1933

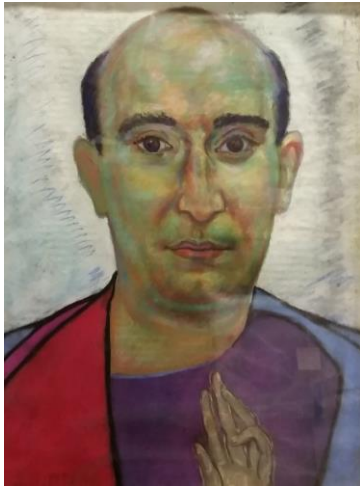
Pastel and charcoal on newsprint

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

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Delaney produced this portrait of his younger brother and fellow artist Joseph (1903-1991) during a stay in Knoxville in 1933. Joseph had just completed his studies with Regionalist painter Thomas Hart Benton at the Art Students League in New York with a group of classmates that included noted Abstract Expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. Joseph Delaney spent the bulk of his career in New York, where he became known for his portraits, figure studies, and lively scenes of urban life along the streets of lower Manhattan. In 1986, he returned to Knoxville and was artist-in-residence at University of Tennessee until

his death in 1991. Joseph Delaney's oil canvas *Marble Collegiate Church* is currently on view in the Higher Ground exhibition on the KMA's third floor.



Dante Pavone as Christ, 1948

Pastel on paper

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Dante Pavone as Christ (1948) depicts one of Beauford's closest friends during the period in which the artist was living at 181 Greene Street in New York's Greenwich Village (1936-1953). Pavone (1910-1997) was a singer and later a voice coach for performers including Aretha Franklin, Mick Jagger, John Lennon, and Steven Tyler. For years, Delaney was obsessed with depicting Pavone, and produced many portraits of him—several of which appear to represent the spirit of his sitter as much or more than his physical likeness. This portrait is especially unusual as the artist presents his subject as Christ, with his left hand raised in a gesture of blessing, and his head encircled by a halo of brilliant white light.

As Delaney's friend author Henry Miller observed in *The Amazing and Invariable Beauford Delaney* (1945),

Supposing that for the next five years he [Delaney] were to do nothing but Dante...Dante was a wondrous landscape for Beauford; he had cosmic proportions, and his skull though shorn of locks was full of mystery. A man studying his friend day in and day out for five years ought to arrive at some remarkable conclusions. With time Dante could become for Beauford what Oedipus became for Freud.



Dante Pavone, 1942

Pastel on paper

Promised gift of Penny Lynch and Kimbro Maguire in honor of Stephen Wicks

Early in his career, Beauford was known for his vibrant pastel portraits such as this image of singer Dante Pavone (1910-1997), who was a close friend of Delaney's during his time in New York between 1936 and 1953. This portrait is a significant example of the artist's New York period portraiture, represents one of his most frequent subjects, and combines elements of his descriptive early style with his later abstract style. It also represents Beauford Delaney's frequent practice of including symbolic background imagery within his portrait compositions.



Self-portrait, 1962

Crayon on newsprint

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

This drawing is a study for the oil self-portrait in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Self-portrait, 1963

Charcoal and conté on newsprint

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Pastel accents enliven this detailed charcoal portrait sketch, which depicts the artist in his early 60s during a period in which he was living in the Montparnasse area of Paris.



Untitled (Self-portrait Studies), late 1950s

Ink on nine spiral notepad pages

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Likely created during a single sitting, this group of lively self-portrait drawings reveals Delaney's interest in exploring aspects of his own character and likeness moment-to-moment from multiple vantage points.



Untitled (New York City), circa 1945

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the KMA's Collectors Circle

Untitled (New York City) reflects Delaney's ability to use bright color and bold geometric forms to depict the streets of his Greenwich Village neighborhood in an expressively condensed and flattened manner reminiscent of a stained glass window.



Untitled (Washington Square Park), circa 1950

Ink on spiral notebook paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Located only a few blocks north of his Greenwich Village studio, Washington Square Park was a key painting location for Beauford Delaney from the late 1930s until the early 1950s. It was a hub of bohemian life and the park's regular outdoor art fairs provided a central venue in which he and other artists were able to display and sell their work.



Untitled (New York City), late 1940s

Pencil on newsprint

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Delaney possessed the ability to distill scenes of his daily environment—here, likely the streets of his Greenwich Village neighborhood seen from an open window—into dramatically refined geometric abstractions.



Untitled (Landscape), late 1940s

Watercolor on paper

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Angled strokes and saturated colors infuse this landscape with an intensity reminiscent of the paintings of Vincent van Gogh, one of Delaney's heroes. Unlike van Gogh, however, Delaney much preferred urban scenes and only rarely produced landscapes devoid of human presence.



Untitled (Abstract, Paris), 1953

Charcoal on paper

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Dated 1953 and inscribed "Paris", this charcoal drawing is significant in that it represents one of the earliest known works produced by Delaney after moving from New York to Paris that same year. It is also an early example of his growing interest in abstraction, which would intensify by the late 1950s. However abstracted, this composition contains imagery suggesting a shadowy moonlit landscape.



Untitled, late 1950s

India ink on newsprint

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This composition stems from a series of similar drawings in which dense clusters of swirling cursive lines fill the page in a manner suggesting a turbulent atmosphere.



Untitled, 1966

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Set against luminous background hues, bold dark blue strokes resemble a cryptic, graffiti-like script.



Untitled (Clamart), 1959

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the KMA's Collectors Circle

Untitled (Clamart) represents Delaney's method of layering contrasting hues and swirling brushwork in order to create luminous, dense atmospheres of brilliant color. Famed writer and lifelong friend James Baldwin noted a striking change in Beauford's paintings during the time he lived in Clamart, a suburb of

Paris, a period during which this work was produced. Baldwin described Beauford's new Clamart paintings as a "metamorphosis into freedom" and marked by a painted light of greater intensity.



Untitled, 1960

Watercolor, gouache, and sand on paper

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In the course of his extensive experiments with the color yellow, Delaney found countless ways to adjust the expressive tone of his compositions. Here, he create a striking effect by applying layers of yellow paint and tiny bits of powdered cobalt blue pigment onto heavy black paper.



Untitled, circa 1960

Watercolor and gouache on paper

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The color yellow appears frequently in Delaney's paintings, especially those created after his move to Clamart, a Paris suburb, in December of 1955. Delaney believed various hues held spiritual significance and for him the color yellow possessed the properties of light, healing, and redemption.



Scattered Light, 1964

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

As with Impressionist painter Claude Monet, light was a central subject for Beauford Delaney. While Monet sought to observe and record the appearance of light reflected off objects around him, Delaney's obsession with light often led him to dissolve all references to the visible world in abstract seas of brilliant color. Many of his paintings bear titles with the word "light" preceded by an adjective associated with movement. In this composition, the artist suggests movement by clustering dabs of contrasting colors to produce a vibrant effect not unlike flickering pixels on a digital screen.



Untitled, 1960

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by Brenda and Larry Thompson

This composition is unusual among Delaney's works in that he departs from his usual practice of filling the entire painting surface by leaving his central imagery framed by a wide margin of blank paper. It stems from his time living in the Paris suburb of Clamart (1955-1961), and may exemplify the significant changes in his art as recalled by his close friend James Baldwin:

There was a window in Beauford's house in Clamart before which we often sat—late at night, early in the morning, at noon. This window looked out on a garden; or, rather, it would have looked out at a garden if it had not been for the leaves and branches of a large tree which pressed directly against the window. Everything one saw from this window, then, was filtered through these leaves. And this window was a kind of universe, moaning and wailing when it rained, black and bitter when it thundered, hesitant and delicate with the first light of morning, and as blue as the blues when the last light of sun departed. Well, that life, that light, that miracle, are what I began to see in Beauford's paintings, and this light began to stretch back for me over all the time we had known each other, and over much more time than that, and this light held the power to illuminate, even to redeem and reconcile and heal.

- James Baldwin, "Introduction to Exhibition of Beauford Delaney Opening," Gallery Lambert, December 4, 1964



Untitled (Study for Street Scene), 1967

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

This sun-drenched composition is one of several preparatory sketches Delaney produced for an oil painting entitled *Street Scene* (1968), which depicts elevated train tracks.



Untitled (Knoxville Landscape), 1969

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Beauford Delaney produced this rare view of his hometown in December of 1969 during one of the only return visits he made after settling in Paris in 1953. Its tangled brushwork captures the lush character of East Tennessee's landscape, which he may have found more dense and untamed than he remembered after so many years of urban life in New York and Paris.

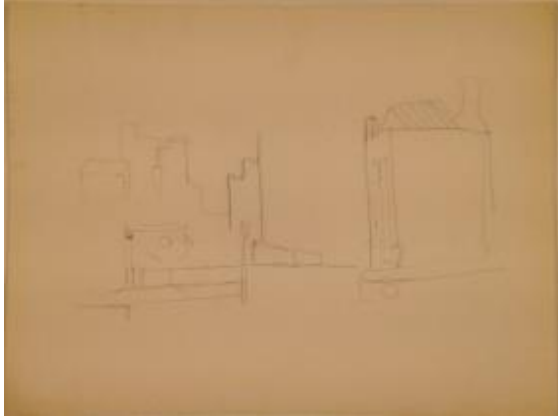


Knoxville, 1969

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

This scene depicts a Knoxville dwelling and its rural surroundings as if through a veil of mist or rain. Delaney created it during his last documented visit to his hometown from December 1969-January 1970. During the visit, he and his brother Joseph discussed the prospect of a two-person exhibition at the McClung Museum at the University of Tennessee, where their mother Delia once worked as a janitor. Unfortunately, after his return to Paris, Beauford's health prevented him from participating and Joseph ended up exhibiting his work alone.



Untitled (Paris), 1950s

Pencil on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Using only a handful of carefully placed pencil lines, Delaney captures the distinct architectural character of his Montparnasse neighborhood.



Untitled (Château de Chambord), 1971

Ink on paper

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Delaney often explored Paris and its surroundings in search of artistic inspiration, in many cases on foot. This late drawing describes in painstaking detail the famous chateau located about two hours south of Paris.



Untitled (Saxophone Player), late 1950s

Ink on spiral notebook paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Delaney was a gifted musician and an avid fan of jazz music, which he considered “warm, vibrant, and conducive to dreaming and romantic musing.” He created lively paintings of jazz clubs, performers, and audiences in New York and in Paris. He also produced portraits of jazz luminaries whom he befriended such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Ethel Waters, W. C. Handy, and Ella Fitzgerald. This untitled sketch may have been done in preparation for one of his jazz club paintings.



Untitled (La Coupole), early 1960s

Ink on envelope

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

La Coupole is a well-known bar and restaurant in Paris's Montparnasse neighborhood and was a favorite haunt of Delaney and his avant garde circle of friends who resided nearby. When he ran out of standard sketch paper and canvases, the artist often drew and painted on non-traditional materials such as old raincoats, gum wrappers, or this envelope from Paris's Galerie Darthea Speyer. Speyer exhibited Delaney's work regularly during the latter part of his career.



Untitled, 1972

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Delaney possessed an uncommon ability to produce abstractions of great depth and variation. This late work features contrasting background colors muted by a thin wash of pale pigment. The composition is enlivened by bold multi-directional brushwork.



Untitled, 1960s

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Unlike many of the artist's abstractions, which appear as loose atmospheres of vibrant color, this small watercolor contains strong landscape references in the form of horizontal bands of green.



Untitled (Fruit), circa 1969

Pastel on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

The relatively few still lifes Delaney produced are as powerfully expressive and alive with movement as his portraits, landscapes, and abstractions. This delicate pastel, however, is striking in its smoothly rendered overlapping forms, gentle gradations of color, and overall simplicity.



Untitled (West African Figurine), early 1960s

Ink on foil wrapper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

Delaney had a profound interest in African art, and he here depicts a West African figurine as the focal point of a still life sketch rendered on a paper wrapper. The artist struggled financially throughout his life, and often had to make use of every scrap of paper and fabric available.



Untitled (Tuileries, France), 1966

Pastel on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve



Untitled (Tuileries, France), 1966

Pastel and scratches on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

In these two related pastels inspired by a visit to Paris's Tuileries Garden, Delaney explores subtle variations on a compositional theme in which looping contours of cool colors are set against fiery backgrounds.



Moving Sunlight, circa 1965

Oil on canvas

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

This canvas represents the extent to which Delaney was fascinated by the color yellow. The color appears in his art with increasing prominence from the late 1950s until the end of his life. For the artist, its brilliant hues offered a purifying visual refuge from the psychological turmoil that plagued him throughout his life, and ultimately led to his institutionalization in 1975.



Untitled, circa 1962-63

Watercolor on paper

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

In the early 1960s, Delaney created a series of watercolors in which he experimented with broad washes of pigment that he applied loosely and then watched them interact and coalesce.



Untitled, 1928

Charcoal on paper

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

This untitled portrait stems from Delaney's time in Boston (1923-1929), during which he discovered in the city's museums the work of modern masters such as Monet, Picasso, Matisse, and van Gogh, whose groundbreaking paintings inspired him to turn away from academic realism and pursue a path toward expressive abstraction.



Composition, Peinture (Light Blue to Gold Abstraction), circa 1958

Oil on canvas

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

This painting represents Delaney's ability to build richly textured surfaces by applying multiple layers of thick oil pigment. The artist creates dramatic highlights by brushing brilliant yellow and gold paint across bumpy areas of darker pigments.



Untitled, 1964

Watercolor on paper

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

Sketchbooks and photographs, 1940s-1970s

Estate of Beauford Delaney, by permission of Derek L. Spratley

When he was not painting, Delaney often wrote or drew in small sketchbooks, using them as an outlet for personal reflection, and a means of recording ideas for later paintings. These are but a few of the dozens of sketchbooks, photographs, and other archival objects in the artist's estate. They offer invaluable glimpses of Delaney's daily life, creative ideas, and artistic process.